

Message Text

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SUBJ: FRENCH AIRCRAFT SALES TO SA

FOLLOWING TEXT INCLUDED IN APARTHEID COMITE PRESS
RELEASE OF SEPTEMBER 24:

"MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE

THE CHAIRMAN SAID THAT HE AND THE RAPPORTEUR HAD MET
WITH THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE ON 19 SEPTEMBER,
AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST, SO THAT THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF FRANCE COULD GIVE AN ORAL REPLY "ON A PERSONAL BASIS"
TO THE COMMITTEE'S LETTER CONCERNING MILITARY CO-OPERATION
BETWEEN FRANCE AND SOUTH AFRICA.

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, HE WENT ON, HAD SAID IT
WAS A FACT THAT FRANCE HAD SOLD MIRAGE AIRCRAFT TO SOUTH
AFRICA. HOWEVER, THE FRENCH POSITION HAD ALWAYS BEEN THAT
THERE WAS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN WEAPONS FOR ANTI-GUERRILLA
OPERATIONS AND WEAPONS FOR EXTERNAL DEFENCE. SINCE 1962,
FRANCE HAD BANNED THE SALE OF SMALL ARMS, AMMUNITION FOR
SMALL ARMS, SLOW-FLYING RECONNAISSANCE PLANS AND HELICOPTERS
TO SOUTH AFRICA, AS WELL AS LIGHT TANKS AND OTHER WEAPONS
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WHICH COULD BE USED IN POLICE OPERATIONS.

AS FOR THE MIRAGE, THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE HAD SAID IT WAS A HIGH-SPEED INTERCEPTOR PLANE WHICH COULD BE USED ONLY AGAINST ATTACKING PLANES. THE MIRAGE WAS NOT A LONG-RANGE PLANE, AND NO AFRICAN STATE, EXCEPT FOR ZAMBIA, COULD BE REACHED BY ATTACKING MIRAGES.

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE HAD SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD PLACED A RESTRICTION ON EVERY SALE OF ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ARMS COULD BE USED ONLY DEFENSIVELY, THE CHAIRMAN CONTINUED. FRANCE WOULD STOP SUPPLYING SPARE PARTS IF SOUTH AFRICA DID NOT ABIDE BY THESE RESTRICTIONS. THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE HAD SAID HE DID NOT THINK SOUTH AFRICA WAS "IN AN AGGRESSIVE MOOD RIGHT NOW" BUT FRANCE WOULD "KEEP AN EYE ON THE SITUATION".

THE CHAIRMAN, IN HIS STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT, SAID HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE THE POSITION OF THE COMMITTEE THAT THERE COULD BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE ARMS EMBARGO NOR ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE WEAPONS.

FRANCE HAD GIVEN THE COMMITTEE THIS SAME EXPLANATION BEFORE, SAID THE CHAIRMAN, "BUT A THOUSAND EXPLANATIONS WILL NOT CONVINCE US OF THE PROPRIETY OF SUPPLYING MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE VERY CLEAR RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY".

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME, DECLARED THE CHAIRMAN, WAS "A RACIST REGIME OPPRESSING THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY" AND IT WAS "A CRIMINAL REGIME ENGAGED IN INHUMAN ACTS AGAINST THE AFRICAN POPULATION, AS EVERYONE CAN SEE FROM THE RECENT KILLING OF MINE-WORKERS AT CARLETONVILLE". MOREOVER, HE SAID, IT WAS "AN AGGRESSIVE REGIME WHICH CONTINUES IN ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF NAMIBIA; WHICH HAS SENT FORCES INTO ZIMBABWE TO SUPPORT THE RACIST CLIQUE AND SUPPRESS THE AFRICAN PEOPLE ENGAGED IN A LEGITIMATE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM; WHICH HAS ASSISTED THE PORTUGUESE IN COLONIAL WARS; AND WHICH HAS THREATENED

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INDEPENDENT AFRICAN STATES".

WHAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME SOUGHT TO "DEFEND", HE SAID, WAS "THE OPPRESSION OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE -- AND ANY ASSISTANCE TO THAT REGIME CONSTITUTES DIRECT OR INDIRECT COMPLICITY IN THAT OPPRESSION".

THE CHAIRMAN REAFFIRMED THE COMMITTEE'S POSITION IN FAVOUR

OF "THE STRICTEST IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARMS EMBARGO
AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, WITHOUT ANY EXCEPTIONS OR RESERVATIONS",
AND SAID THAT HIS REMARKS APPLIED TO ALL COUNTRIES LENDING
MILITARY CO-OPERATION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME."
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